

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 01685 01 OF 03 171938Z
ACTION H-03

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 ISO-00 SS-15 SSO-00 NSCE-00 AID-01
/026 W

-----033340 172036Z /50

O R 171251Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO USINFO WASHDC IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY RANGOON IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8240

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 3 BANGKOK 1685/1

E.O. 11652: N/A
SUBJ: WOLFF JANUARY 17 BANGKOK DEPARTURE NEWS CONFERENCE

USIA FOR IEA, IOP/M, IBS IPS, IOR/RIM

FOLLOWING IS THE USIS-PREPARED TRANSCRIPT OF THE NEWS
CONFERENCE REPRESENTATIVE LESTER L. WOLFF (D-NY) AND MEMBERS
OF HIS PARTY HELD JANUARY 17 AT BANGKOK AIRPORT FOLLOWING
A VISIT TO THAILAND.

(BEGIN TRANSCRIPT)

WOLFF: FIRST OF ALL LET ME SAY THAT WE ARE DELIGHTED TO BE HERE,
EVEN IF ONLY FOR A SHORT PERIOD OF TIME. THE TOUR THAT WE HAVE
BEEN TAKING BRINGS US TO SOME TEN COUNTRIES OF ASIA AND THE SOUTH
PACIFIC AREA. WE FELT IT IMPORTANT TO STOP HERE IN THAILAND JUST
FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS. ONE, OF COURSE, BEING THE JOINT INTEREST
THAT WE HAVE IN THE SUPPRESSION OF NARCOTICS, AND SECONDLY TO
RENEW OUR FRIENDSHIPS THAT HAVE GROWN OVER THE YEARS WITH THE
THAI PEOPLE AND THE THAI GOVERNMENT. THE OBJECTIVES OF OUR MISSION
HAVE BEEN TO LOOK AT THE AREAS OF MUTUAL SECURITY AS WELL AS
TO GET AN IDEA FROM THE VARIOUS LEADERS OF THESE COUNTRIES AS
TO THEIR FEELINGS RELATIVE TO THE INDIVIDUAL INTERESTS THAT THEY
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HAVE, TOGETHER WITH THEIR OPINION OF THE SECURITY SITUATION THAT
EXISTS IN THIS AREA OF THE WORLD.

WE SPENT A SHORT PERIOD OF TIME WITH THE PRIME MINISTER AND
THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER, TOGETHER WITH THE MINISTER FOR
AGRICULTURE. WE BROKE UP INTO SMALL GROUPS SO THAT WE COULD TALK
INTENSIVELY FOR THE SHORT PERIOD OF TIME THAT WE'VE BEEN HERE.

WE ALSO PROJECTED AN IDEA THAT WE THINK IS QUITE IMPORTANT TO THE RELATIONSHIP THAT EXISTS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THIS AREA OF THE WORLD, IN PROJECTING THE THOUGHT OF SETTING UP AN ASIAN AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY. THIS IS THE OBJECTIVE, TO INDICATE THAT THE UNITED STATES IS A PACIFIC NATION, AS WELL AS BEING AN ATLANTIC NATION, AND THAT OUR INTEREST IN THIS AREA OF THE WORLD IS NOT FLAGGING BY ANY MEANS. WE HAVE A CONTINUED INTEREST IN ASIA. WE ALSO DO NOT MEAN TO INFER BY THE READJUSTMENT OF FORCES THAT WE HAVE HAD IN VARIOUS OTHER AREAS OF ASIA THAT THE UNITED STATES DOES NOT CONTINUE ITS INTEREST AND ITS RESPONSIBILITY IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD.

MY COLLEAGUES HERE -- BY THE WAY, I MIGHT TELL YOU THAT OUR MISSION IS COMPOSED OF PEOPLE FROM BOTH POLITICAL PARTIES; IT'S A BI-PARTISAN DELEGATION, AS WELL AS PEOPLE FROM VARIOUS AREAS OF THE UNITED STATES SO THAT IT IS TRULY A REPRESENTATIVE GROUP. WE SHOULD BE DELIGHTED TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS THAT YOU MIGHT HAVE. BECAUSE OF THE LIMITATIONS OF TIME, WE ARE NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO SPEND TOO MUCH TIME WITH YOU HERE NOW. IN FACT, BECAUSE WE RAN OVER IN THE MEETING WITH THE PRIME MINISTER, WE MAY NOT BE ABLE TO SPEND AS MUCH TIME AS YOU WOULD LIKE, BUT WE WILL TRY TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS THAT YOU MIGHT HAVE.

QUESTION: CONGRESSMAN WOLFF, I'D LIKE TO ASK YOU ABOUT YOUR REPORT THAT WAS ISSUED LAST YEAR.

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ANSWER: YES.

QUESTION: IN THE REPORT YOU SAID THAT YOU FELT THAT THE ALTERNATIVE OF PROVIDING THE BURMESE WITH INCREASED MILITARY AID TO LIMIT THE NARCOTICS, TO TRY TO AVOID FUTURE EXPORTS OF NARCOTICS, WOULD BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE. YESTERDAY, MS. FALCO STATED THAT ALL THE INITIATIVES TO SPEAK TO THE SHAN REBELS OR MEMBERS OF THE SHAN STATES WOULD BE TERMINATED, THAT THERE WOULD BE NO MORE EFFORT ON THE PART OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT TO DO THIS, AND SHE SUGGEST THAT YOU MIGHT HAVE CHANGED YOUR OPINION.

ANSWER: WELL, THERE IS A SEPARATION OF POWERS IN OUR COUNTRY, AND I DO THINK THAT WE HAVE TO CONTINUE WHATEVER EFFORTS THERE CAN BE IN ORDER TO STOP THE NARCOTICS FROM COMING INTO OUR COUNTRY. BUT UNFORTUNATELY, PRESENT METHODS HAVE NOT BEEN SUCCESSFUL AND CERTAINLY, WE HAVE NOT BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN ANY EFFORTS AT EVEN NEGOTIATING WITH THE SHANS. WE HAVE NOT MET WITH ANY PEOPLE ON THIS TRIP. AS YOU CAN SEE WE ARE HERE ONLY FOR FOUR HOURS. HOWEVER, I MUST SAY THAT WE MUST DO MORE. I THINK THAT THE THAI GOVERNMENT TODAY IS DOING WHAT IT CAN IN ORDER TO SUPPRESS THE NARCOTICS FLOW THROUGH THIS COUNTRY. IN TALKING TO THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, HE HAS EXPLAINED TO US THE CROP

SUBSTITUTION PROGRAM THAT THEY ARE ENGAGED IN AND IT HAS BEEN A SUCCESSFUL EFFORT. THEY ARE GETTING THE FARMERS TO CONVERT OVER THE THINGS, THE GROWING OF OTHER FLOWERS THAT MAY NOT BE AS MIND-ALTERING AS OPIUM BUT PERHAPS WILL PROVIDE THE FARMER WITH AN EQUAL AMOUNT OF REVENUE, IN PRODUCING GLADIOLUS, FOR EXAMPLE, FOR THE EUROPEAN MARKET. AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT IS THAT ALTHOUGH THE BURMESE HAVE BEEN GIVING AN INCREASING COOPERATION TO THE UNITED STATES, THE AREAS THAT ARE NOT IN THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT CONTROL CONTINUE TO PLY THE NARCOTICS TRADE, AND WE MUST FIND SOME WAYS AND MEANS OF TRYING TO BRING ABOUT A CESSATION OF THIS TRAFFIC.

QUESTION: HAS THE ADVICE YOU GAVE FORTH IN THIS PAMPHLET CHANGED OVER THE PAST FEW MONTHS, OR DO YOU STILL FEEL THAT WE NEED TO
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MAKE SOME SORT OF CONTACT WITH THE SHAN PEOPLE THEMSELVES WHO ARE GROWING THE CROPS?

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INFO OCT-01 EA-06 ISO-00 SS-15 SSO-00 NSCE-00 AID-01
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-----033645 172033Z /50

O R 171251Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO USINFO WASHDC IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY RANGOON IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8241

UNCLAS SECTION 2 OF 3 BANGKOK 1685/2

USIA FOR IEA, IOP/M, IBS IPS, IOR/RIM

ANSWER: I DON'T KNOW WHETHER WE HAVE TO MAKE IT WITH THE SHAN PEOPLE, BUT I DO BELIEVE THAT WE MUST MAKE A GREATER EFFORT WITH THE BURMESE IN ORDER TO SEE TO IT THAT WE FIND A MEANS OF REACHING THOSE PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT WITHIN THE CONTROL OF THE CENTRAL

GOVERNMENT. NOW, THE UNITED STATES HAS SUPPORTED, THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, THE QUESTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS, AND THERE ARE QUESTIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS THAT EXIST PERHAPS IN BURMA AS WELL AS IN OTHER AREAS OF THE WORLD. AND ON THIS BASIS, I THINK THAT WE AS A NATION HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO EXPLORE EVERY POSSIBILITY THAT EXISTS TO TRY TO MERGE THE INTERESTS OF OURS WITH OTHER PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. AND IT'S STRANGE, BUT THE QUESTION OF THE INSURGENCY, IF YOU WANT TO CALL IT THAT, OR WHATEVER EXISTS IN THOSE STATES, AND THE TRAFFIC IN NARCOTICS SEEM TO HAVE A MERGED INTEREST. ONE THING FOR SURE, AND I THINK THAT MY COLLEAGUES ON THE COMMITTEE ON NARCOTICS CONTROL SHARE THIS BELIEF, AND THAT IS THAT WE HAVE NOT BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN STOPPING THE TRAFFICE COMING IN FROM BURMA AND WE HAVE TO DO SOMETHING TO REINFORCE THAT EFFORT.

DO YOU WANT TO SAY SOMETHING ON THES, CHARLIE?

REPRESENTATIVE CHARLES B. RANGLE (DEMOCRAT-NEW YORK): I WOULD UNCLASSIFIED

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LIKE TO. I THINK IT'S ABSOLUTELY RIDICULOUS WHEN HEADS OF NATIONS FIND THAT THEY DO NOT HAVE A RELATIONSHIP WITH THOSE PEOPLE THAT ARE GROWING THE OPIUM AND INFESTING COMMUNITIES WHICH ARE TRYING TO PROSPER. AND SO WHETHER OR NOT THE OFFICIALS IN THAILAND HAVE A RELATIONSHIP WITH THOSE PEOPLE IN BURMA, WHETHER OR NOT THE PEOPLE IN SINGAPORE OR THE ASEAN COUNTRIES CAN'T MANAGE TO GET ANY COMMUNICATION AT ALL WITH THE BURMESE, I WOULD BELIEVE THAT IF WE WERE DEALING WITH MISSILES THAT WERE COMING OUT OF THIS PART OF THE WORLD THAT WE WOULD COLLECTIVELY COME TOGETHER AND SAY THAT THERE WOULD HAVE TO BE A HALT TO IT, WHETHER IT WAS DONE BY THE UNITED NATIONS OR SOME OTHER WORLD ORGANIZATION. SO I AGREE WITH THE CHAIRMAN THAT WE JUST CAN'T SAY THAT WE'RE HELPLESS MERELY BECAUSE THE BURMESE DO NOT HAVE CONTROL OVER THE PART OF THE COUNTRY.

WOLFF: ONE ASPECT OF THIS AS WELL: IF THE FACT THAT WE HAVE FURNISHED ASSISTANCE IN THE ANTI-NARCOTICS EFFORT TO THE BURMESE, I HAVE A CONCERN THAT THE ASSISTANCE THAT WE HAVE GIVEN NOT BE MISUSED. WE HAVE EXPERIENCE WITH THE MISUSE OF AID IN THE PAST, AND I AM SURE, THOUGH, THAT THE BURMESE GOVERNMENT IS DESIROUS OF COOPERATING WITH US TO THE FULLEST EXTENT THAT THEY POSSIBLY CAN.

QUESTION: CONGRESSMAN WOLFF, DURING YOUR LUNCH WITH THE PRIME MINISTER, WHAT HAVE YOU DISCUSSED WITH HIM ON THE NARCOTICS PROBLEM IN OUR COUNTRY?

ANSWER: WE DISCUSSED WITH HIM THE CONTINUING EFFORTS OF THE THAI GOVERNMENT. HE HAS PLEDGED NOT ONLY TO CONTINUE WHAT HE HAS DONE IN THE PAST BUT HAS PLEDGED A RENEWED EFFORT IN ATTEMPTING TO SOLVE THIS PROBLEM. HE SEES THIS AS A MUTUAL PROBLEM FOR BOTH

OF OUR NATIONS AND NOT JUST A PROBLEM OF THE UNITED STATES.
NARCOTICS TRAFFIC IS AN INSIDIOUS ACTIVITY THAT ACTUALLY THREATENS
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THE GOVERNMENT WHERE THE PRODUCT IS GROWN OR WHERE THE PRODUCT IS
TRANSPORTED, BECAUSE IT SETS UP A SYSTEM THAT PROVIDES FOR THE
CLIMATE OF CORRUPTION AND ACTUALLY IS A THREAT TO THE CENTRAL
GOVERNMENTS OF THE NATIONS THAT ARE INVOLVED. WE ALSO DISCUSSED
OTHER POINTS ON THE QUESTION OF MUTUAL SECURITY AND THE LIKE, AND
I BELIEVE THAT THE TALKS WERE VERY FRANK AND I THINK THAT WE HAVE
A VERY COMMON PURPOSE IN ALL OF THE EFFORTS THAT WE HAVE EXTENDED
IN THE PAST, AND I HOPE THAT THIS WILL BE A CONTINUING RELATION-
SHIP IN THE FUTURE.

QUESTION: IN WHICH PARTICULAR AREA THAT THE JOINT EFFORT SHOULD
BE STEPPED UP FOR NARCOTICS CONTROL?

ANSWER: THERE ARE A VARIETY OF THINGS THAT CAN BE DONE. NUMBER
ONE IS THAT THE INTERDICTION EFFORTS HAVE TO BE STEPPED UP, THERE
IS NO QUESTION ABOUT THAT, BUT WHAT IS HAPPENING NOW IS THAT THE
TRAFFICKERS ARE USING ALTERNATE ROUTES, AND THAT'S ONE OF THE
REASONS WHY WE WENT TO MALAYSIA. USING THE PORT OF PENANG,
FOR INSTANCE, AS A TRANSHIPMENT POINT. WHEREAS BANGKOK USED TO
BE THE PRINCIPAL PORT OF TRANSHIPMENT, THERE ARE OTHER AREAS OF
THE WORLD TODAY THAT ARE TAKING THE PLACE OF BANGKOK, BECAUSE IT
IS BECOMING MORE DIFFICULT TO HAVE THE TRAFFICKERS COME THROUGH
THIS COUNTRY. WE DO NOTICE ONE THING: THAT THE PRICE, THE
BORDER PRICE, OF OPIUM AND MORPHINE BASE HAS GONE DOWN, THE
REASON BEING THAT THERE IS AN OVER-SUPPLY IN THE AREA OF THE
BORDER. THE BIGGEST PROBLEM WE FACE RIGHT NOW IS THE QUESTION
OF THE LABORATORIES THAT EXIST ON THE BURMESE SIDE OF THE BORDER.
WE MUST FIND SOME WAY OR MEANS OF DESTROYING THOSE LABORATORIES.
BUT CONCURRENTLY WITH THAT, WE HAVE TO FIND SOME MEANS OF
REDUCING DEMAND, AND THAT'S PART OF OUR ROLE. THE ROLE OF OUR
COMMITTEE IN THIS COMING YEAR WILL BE TO ADDRESS ITSELF TO
THE PROBLEM OF REDUCING THE DEMAND, REDUCING THE REASONS WHY
PEOPLE ARE IN DRUGS IN THE FIRST PLACE. IF YOU REDUCE THE DEMAND,
YOU CERTAINLY WILL FIND THAT THERE WILL BE A LESSENING OF THE
PROBLEM. BUT IT IS A QUESTION OF BOTH SUPPLY AND DEMAND, AND
THEREFORE, WE SHARE RESPONSIBILITY NOT ONLY WITH THE THAI BUT
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WITH OTHER PEOPLE IN THIS AREA OF THE WORLD IN ORDER TO TRY TO
ROOT OUT THE NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS WHO ARE EXPLOITING THE PEOPLE
AND THE FARMERS HERE, WHO ARE EXPLOITING THE PEOPLE WHOSE
LAND THEY TRAVEL THROUGH, BECAUSE THIS GOVERNMENT GETS NO

TAXES FROM THEM, AND EXPLOITING OUR PEOPLE AT HOME BY PERMITTING THEM TO HAVE NARCOTICS WHICH DESTROY OUR YOUNG PEOPLE

QUESTION: SPEAKING OF THE ALTERNATE ROUTE, DOES THE ROUTE ALSO PASS THROUGH THAI TERRITORY DOWN TO PENANG?

ANSWER: SOME PART OF IT, YES.

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ACTION H-03

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 ISO-00 SS-15 SSO-00 NSCE-00 AID-01
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-----033668 172035Z /50

O R 171251Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO USINFO WASHDC IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY RANGOON IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8242

UNCLAS FINAL SECTION OF 3 BANGKOK 1685/3

USIA FOR IEA, IOP/M, IBS IPS, IOR/RIM

QUESTION: LAST YEAR IN APRIL YOU CAME TO BANGKOK, AND YOU WENT BACK AND EXPOSED ON THE HOUSE FLOOR THE NAMES OF TWELVE PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE FOR TRAFFICKING IN OUR COUNTRY. WHAT IS THE SPECIFIC PURPOSE THAT YOU DID SO? DON'T YOU THINK THAT IT OBSTRUCTS OUR SUPPRESSION PROCESS HERE?

ANSWER: WELL, I THINK THAT THE PROOF OF THAT IS THE FACT THAT A NUMBER OF THESE PEOPLE HAVE BEEN APPREHENDED AND HAD BEEN TRAFFICKING FOR MANY YEARS IN THE PAST. THE PROOF OF IT AS WELL IS THE FACT THAT IT HAS COMPLETELY UPSET THE MECHANISM OF TRAFFICKING IN THIS AREA OF THE WORLD. MANY OF THOSE PEOPLE HAVE GONE INTO HIDING, OTHERS OF THEM HAVE EVEN STOPPED TRAFFICKING. SOME OTHERS WHO OPERATED UNDER VERY DEEP COVERS HAVE BEEN FOUND TO HAVE LARGE CACHES IN THEIR HOMES OR IN THEIR OFFICES AND HAVE NOW BEEN APPREHENDED BY THE THAI POLICE.

QUESTION: DO YOU HAVE ANY KNOWLEDGE OF ANY OTHER MAJOR DRUG TRAFFICKERS IN THAILAND?

ANSWER: WELL, WHEN I GET ON THE PLANE,I'LL LET YOU KNOW.
(LAUGHTER)
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QUESTION: CAN I TOUCH ON THE SECURITY PROBLEM? WHAT'S YOUR
IMPRESSION ON THE FEELING OF THE THAI LEADERS ABOUT
SECURITY IN THIS AREA?

ANSWER: WE NEED TO LET SOME OF THE MEMBERS OF OUR ARMED
SERVICES COMMITTEE WHO ARE TRAVELLING WITH US SPEAK TO THAT
POINT. DON?

REPRESENTATIVE DONALD J. MITCHELL (REPUBLICAN-NEW YORK): THANK
YOU, MR. CHAIRMAN. BEFORE I GO INTO IT I WOULD JUST LIKE TO SAY
THAT THIS IS THE FIRST TIME THAT I'VE TRAVELLED IN THIS PART OF
THE WORLD, AND IT'S BEEN A VERY EYE-OPENING EXPERIENCE, I AM
PARTICULARLY IMPRESSED WITH THE LEADERSHIP. I WISH WE HAD A
LONG TIME TO SPEND HERE SO THAT WE COULD LEARN MUCH MORE ABOUT
YOUR COUNTRY AND ALL OF YOUR NEEDS,. BUT WE HAD ABOUT THREE HOURS
AT LUNCH, AND YOUR LEADERS PRESENTED THEIR PROBLEMS AND OFFERED
SUGGESTIONS IN THE MOST PLEASANT WAY I'VE EVER HAD IT DONE.
I'M IMPRESSED WITH THE FRIENDLINESS, THE HOSPITALITY AND
THE SENSE OF HUMOR THAT MANY OF YOUR LEADERS HAVE. THEY WERE
CONCERNED -- ONE OF THE GENTLEMEN I TALKED TO WAS CONCERNED
THAT THERE MIGHT NOT BE AN ADEQUATE SUPPLY OF AMERICAN WEAPONS
AVAILABLE IF THEY WERE NEEDED. AND WE'RE CERTAINLY GOING TO
CARRY THAT MESSAGE BACK HOME. WE WANT TO BE SURE THAT OUR
FRIENDS DO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO HELP THEM SOLVE THEIR OWN
PROBLEMS OF SECURITY AS WELL AS DEFENSE.

QUESTION: I HATE TO HARP ON THE SUBJECT OF BURMA BUT I UNDERSTAND
THERE ARE NO DEA REPRESENTATIVES IN BURMA AT THE TIME, ALTHOUGH
WE ARE IN FACT GIVING AID TO THE BURMESE GOVERNMENT IN HOPE OF
SUPPRESSING THE NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING THERE. I'D LIKE TO KNOW
WHAT YOUR FEELING ABOUT THIS IS. CAN WE, IN FACT, AFFORD TO
GIVE S VOUNTRY A LARGE AMOUNT OF AID THAT WILL NOT ALLOW US TO
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HAVE A PERMANENT RESIDENT OVERSEEING THE PROJECT?

WOLFF: I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE YOU WITH ME BACK TO THE CONGRESS,
BECAUSE THAT'S JUST THE WAY I FEEL.

REPRESENTATIVE JOE SKUBITZ (REPUBLICAN-KANSAS): MAY I SAY
SOMETHING, MR. WOLFF?

WOLFF: PLEASE DO.

SKUBITZ: I THINK MY COLLEAGUE HAS COVERED THE SERIOUS SIDE OF THIS. I WOULD LIKE TO SAY SOMETHING IN A LIGHTER VEIN. I, LIKE MY COLLEAGUE FROM NEW YORK, HAVE COME TO SEE, HEAR, AND OBSERVE. WHAT I HAVE SEEN AND WHAT I HAVE HEARD, I LIKE. I WAS PARTICULARLY PLEASED IN MEETING YOUR PRIME MINISTER AND DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER, FOR I FIND THAT YOUR PRIME MINISTER SERVED ONE YEAR AT FT. LEAVENWORTH, KANSAS IN OUR MILITARY INSTALLATION WHICH IS IN MY STATE, AND THAT HE ALSO BOUGHT SOME CATTLE IN KANSAS AND BROUGHT THEM BACK TO YOUR COUNTRY. AND THEN YOUR DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER'S SON GRADUATED FROM KANSAS UNIVERSITY. SO I FEEL RATHER CLOSER TO THAILAND TODAY.

WOLFF: WE JUST ARE REALLY VERY PLEASED WITH THE FACT THAT WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO STOP HERE. THE JOURNEY THAT WE'VE HAD HAS BEEN FAIRLY LONG AND ARDUOUS, BUT THE MERE FACT THAT WE WERE ABLE TO TALK TO THE PRIME MINISTER AND MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENT HERE IN AS FRANK TERMS AS WE WERE ABLE TO, IS REALLY MOST REASSURING TO US. THERE ARE SOME COUNTRIES THAT WE FIND GREAT DIFFICULTY IN COMMUNICATING WITH. HERE WE DON'T FIND THAT A PROBLEM. THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

(END TRANSCRIPT)

WOLFF, ANSWERING QUESTION FROM NEWSDAY CORRESPONDENT ABOUT COOPERATION FROM BURMA IN ANTI-NARCOTICS EFFORTS (QUESTION NOT ON TAPE) REPLIED:
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(BEGIN TRANSCRIPT)

WOLFF: IT'S AN UNFORTUNATE SITUATION. BUT THERE'S NOT A TRUE APPRECIATION OF THE PROBLEMS THAT EXIST HERE. I'VE COME TO THIS AREA FOR A LONG TIME AND I'VE BEEN A FAIRLY GOOD STUDENT OF THE PROBLEM, AND UNLESS WE GET GREATER COOPERATION FROM BURMA, ALL THE EFFORTS THAT THE THAIS MAKE WILL BE REALLY TO NO AVAIL, AND THE PROBLEM IS GOING TO CONTINUE TO PLAGUE US.

(END TRANSCRIPT)
MCGINLEY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NARCOTICS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 jan 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BANGKO01685
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780025-0341
Format: TEL
From: BANGKOK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780157/aaaabvvb.tel
Line Count: 433
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 44d7cfe2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION H
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 8
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 feb 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3765468
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: WOLFF JANUARY 17 BANGKOK DEPARTURE NEWS CONFERENCE USIA FOR IEA, IOP/M, IBS IPS, IOR/RIM FOLLOWING IS THE
USIS-PREPARED TRANSCRIPT OF THE N
TAGS: OREP, SNAR, TH, (WOLFF, LESTER L)
To: STATE RANGOON
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/44d7cfe2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014